



General Assembly

Seventy-second session

First Committee

7th meeting

Monday, 9 October 2017, 3 p.m.

New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda items 52 (b) 90 to 106 (continued)

Programme of work

The Chair: Before proceeding with our work this afternoon, I wish to refer to an important organizational matter. We are confronted with the challenge of accommodating all requests for inscription on the list of speakers within the remaining time allocated for the general debate. Following my consultations with the Bureau, it is my intention, with the consent of the Committee, to schedule an additional meeting tomorrow, Tuesday, 10 October, at 10 a.m., in order to ensure that all Member States that have inscribed their names on the list of speakers for the general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items have a chance to participate in that debate without disrupting the schedule of the thematic discussion. That proposal was communicated to all members by the Secretariat last Friday.

Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Committee agrees with my proposal to schedule an additional meeting on Tuesday, 10 October, at 10 a.m., in order to accommodate all requests for inscription on the list of speakers for the general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items.

It was so decided.

The Chair: I would like to remind all delegations that the list of speakers for the thematic discussion segment, which will start on Wednesday, 11 October, will remain open until Monday, 16 October, at 6 p.m.

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chair: I would like to remind all delegations taking the floor to kindly limit their interventions to eight minutes when speaking in their national capacity.

Mr. Manrique Trejo (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes your election, Sir, and extends its congratulations to the other members of the Bureau elected to direct the work of the First Committee. We offer our support in fully exercising its functions.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, which was awarded the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize, on Friday, 6 October, for its tireless fight to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons.

El Salvador is firmly convinced that disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control are essential elements in fulfilling our commitment to maintain international peace, security and stability, with respect for human rights as the central axis.

My country, which is part of the first densely populated nuclear-free zone through the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Tlatelolco Treaty), welcomes the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. For El Salvador, adopting that Treaty can contribute greatly to efforts to achieve general, complete and irreversible nuclear disarmament, which

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is why my country not only voted for its adoption on 7 July, but also adhered to it from the first day it opened for signature.

The Treaty's provisions regulate the possession, development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer and use of nuclear weapons and also prohibits the threat of use. As we know, threat prevention and nuclear deterrence remain the main justifications for some States possessing that type of weapon of mass destruction. For El Salvador, therefore, the adoption of that Treaty represents a before and after in the area of nuclear disarmament, not only because it is the first instrument negotiated at the United Nations to prohibit nuclear weapons, but also because it strengthens the disarmament machinery and complements the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

We deeply regret the lack of consensus at the 2015 NPT Review Conference, which we believe is a step backward with regard to the progress made at previous NPT Review Conferences. Nevertheless, we express our commitment to continue to participate in the processes leading up to the 2020 NPT Review Conference, which will be a new opportunity for the international community to reaffirm its commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We also regret the lack of political will in the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We hope to see that commitment renewed in the short term.

We call for compliance with the provisions of the NPT, including nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. At the same time, we call on the parties to the Treaty to demonstrate their will and flexibility in seeking to achieve consensus by 2020.

The seventy-second session of the General Assembly is taking place in an environment of increasing tensions in various parts of the world. El Salvador notes the recent carrying out of nuclear tests with special concern. Those acts serve only to undermine international peace, security and stability, as well as endanger the lives of millions of people.

El Salvador supports all denuclearization efforts with faithful adherence to international law and respect for the sovereign equality of States. We consider it prudent to resume dialogue as the only way that could lead to peace and stability in all regions. We urge the countries listed under annex 2 of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to proceed with its swift

ratification in order to ensure its implementation without delay.

El Salvador remains committed to combating and eradicating the illicit manufacturing of, and trafficking in, firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials — activities that endanger well-being as well as economic and social development. In that connection, we recognize the value and contribution of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We highlight the efforts of my country in the full and effective implementation of the Programme. At the same time, we hope that the preparatory process for the third Review Conference, to be held in 2018, will be transparent and inclusive, so as to ensure the success of the Conference and the future pathway of the Programme.

For my country, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) — the first legally binding instrument on the arms trade — is a valuable contribution as well as an effective response to eradicating the hardships suffered by many countries as a result of the illegal and unregulated arms trade, especially when it comes to weapons being used by non-State or unauthorized actors. El Salvador reiterates its commitment to the implementation, promotion, universalization of the ATT as a way of achieving its objectives. We take this opportunity to thank the ATT member States for their valuable support for the Voluntary Trust Fund for the implementation of capacity-building projects for the control and regulation of the use and transfer of firearms. In that regard, I can attest that El Salvador has greatly benefited from it.

We welcome the consensus reached by the Open-ended Working Group tasked with arriving at proposals for goals and an agenda for a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In that regard, we congratulate the delegation of Ecuador for its leadership of that process.

We also welcome the adoption by consensus at the United Nations Disarmament Commission of recommendations and practical confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons. The Disarmament Commission — a deliberative body par excellence — has thereby overcome almost two decades of impasse and given new impetus to the disarmament mechanism.

However, we are greatly concerned that the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to comply

with its mandate for decades. El Salvador urges the States members of the Conference to begin substantive work without delay and adopt a comprehensive programme of work for negotiating a legally binding instrument on negative security assurances and preventing an arms race in outer space.

We have made significant achievements this year. However, as I said earlier, we are living in a tense atmosphere, which requires greater commitment in our discussions in order to come up with tangible steps and responses for each and every situation that undermines international peace, security and stability.

Mr. Gill (India): The Indian delegation congratulates you, Mr. Chair, and the Bureau and assures you of our full support.

We associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

While every year brings with it new developments, risks and opportunities, the First Committee offers a good opportunity to reflect on the past 12 months. The nuclear and missile tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have aggravated existing complexities on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, while triggering universal condemnation and concern. Narrow views on national security interests and misguided notions of parity continued to obstruct the adoption of a programme of work at the Conference on Disarmament (CD), despite promising discussions in the Working Group on the way ahead. It is that frustration with the eight years of inability to negotiate at the CD — in violation of the consensus adoption of a programme of work in May 2009 — that has led to experimentation with forums outside of the agreed disarmament machinery. As a result, the system established by the Final Document of the first special session (SSOD-I) of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2) has paid the price for that obstructionism.

The long-standing view that actual elimination and international verification must accompany disarmament instruments, in particular in the area of weapons of mass destruction, and that the possessors must by necessity be part of the disarmament scheme has been put under new strain. The rift between those who believe that nuclear weapons can be made to vanish by fear and those who believe that nuclear

weapons must be asserted even more vigorously today has grown wider. Technology poses fresh challenges as it becomes reflected in new weapon systems and in the modernization of existing systems with strategic effects. Time is running out for preventing — without exception — the weaponization of outer space.

We need to bridge the growing divide on disarmament through dialogue and a renewed commitment to multilateralism. The disarmament machinery needs to live up to the expectations of its founding fathers. That will require commitment and effort beyond talking points and a genuine attempt to raise the quality of substantive work in each and every forum.

India remains committed to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, consistent with the highest priority accorded to nuclear disarmament by the SSOD-I Final Document. India believes that goal can be achieved through a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed global and non-discriminatory multilateral framework. There is need for a meaningful dialogue among all States possessing nuclear weapons to build trust and confidence, and as well as to reduce the saliency of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines. We support resolution 71/71 and the working paper contained in document CD/2067, which was submitted last year by Member States of the Group 21 and seeks the commencement of negotiations in the CD on a comprehensive nuclear-weapons convention.

India did not participate in the conference leading to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and therefore the Treaty does not create any obligations for India. We will continue to be bound solely by the treaties to which India has given its sovereign consent. However, we remain willing to work with its signatories in disarmament forums to reduce the role and military utility of nuclear weapons, prohibit their use under any circumstances and to eliminate them globally under international verification.

Furthermore, without prejudice to the priority we attach to nuclear disarmament, we are ready to support the commencement of negotiations in the CD on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) on the basis of the mandate set out in document CD/1299. India welcomes the adoption by consensus of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on an FMCT (see A/70/81),

established pursuant to resolution 67/53, which underlines that the negotiation of the treaty in the CD remains a priority that enjoys international support and that the mandate set out in document CD/1299 remains the most suitable basis for negotiations to commence. India actively participated in this year's meeting of the FMCT High-level Expert Preparatory Group and looks forward to continuing discussions next year.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) are worthy examples of global non-discriminatory treaties for the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction. India has completed its obligations on stockpile destruction under the CWC and has contributed to efforts under the United Nations and the Organization of the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for the destruction of Syria's declared chemical weapons stockpiles. The OPCW deserves our full support in addressing any gaps in the relevant declarations and in investigating the recent use of chemical weapons. We call upon all the relevant parties to cooperate fully in that task. We welcome the completion of the destruction of the chemical weapons stockpile held by the Russian Federation under OPCW verification.

We share the widespread interest among BWC States parties to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Convention. Rapidly evolving technology and new proliferation trends, including the threat of the use of biological agents or toxins for terrorist purposes, serve to underline the urgency of the task. India participated actively in the eighth BWC Review Conference, held in November 2016, and submitted specific proposals on key aspects of the Convention. We were disappointed that the Conference could not achieve a result commensurate with the challenge. Nevertheless, it is heartening that there is a clear desire to move ahead. In my capacity as Chair of the 2017 Meeting of States Parties, I look forward to the constructive engagement of all States parties during the annual Meeting in December so that we can deliver successfully on the mandate given to the Meeting by the eighth Review Conference.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons is an important and valuable instrument. India welcomes the outcome of the fifth Review Conference, held in 2016, including the decision to establish the Group of Governmental Experts related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems in the context of the objectives and purposes

of the Convention. In my capacity as Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts, I am pleased with the consultations that are preceding it and I look forward to a stimulating discussion next month in Geneva, which should lay the groundwork for further progress. A continued substantive mandate, adequate financial resources and the participation of all stakeholders are essential in that regard.

Broadly speaking, the accelerating pace of technological change necessitates a comprehensive, system-wide assessment of the potential impact of science and technology developments on the United Nations system's activities in the area of international security and disarmament. Therefore, in addition to its traditional draft resolutions, India will be presenting a draft resolution on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament.

I began my statement with a sombre picture; allow me now to conclude with some optimistic remarks. This year's adoption by consensus in the Disarmament Commission of recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, the adoption by consensus of the objectives and agenda of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, as well as the substantive work undertaken in the CD under the Working Group on the way ahead, all clearly underline that political will and a strong commitment to multilateralism can revitalize the working of the disarmament machinery and help us deliver on the international community's expectations on international security and disarmament. We stand ready to work under your leadership, Mr. Chair, for a successful session of the First Committee so that we can continue that trend of optimism.

Mr. Korneliou (Cyprus): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I am convinced that your rich diplomatic experience will be an asset in the work of the Committee. I assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

Cyprus fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/72/PV.2) and wishes to add the following brief remarks in its national capacity.

International peace and security constitute a primary objective of the foreign policy of the Republic of Cyprus. We remain committed to working for

substantive progress in all relevant disarmament forums. In that spirit, we have signed and ratified all of the main disarmament and non-proliferation treaties. Cyprus has also been a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Australia Group since 2000. Furthermore, in accordance with the provisions of Security resolution resolution 1540 (2004), Cyprus submits regular reports on the implementation of the resolution. In 2002, we signed the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation and, since 2005, we have participated in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). In May 2015, in an effort to promote regional cooperation, Cyprus co-hosted with the United States a successful table top regional exercise in the framework of the PSI. Cyprus was also recently elected as a member of the Arms Trade Treaty Management Committee.

In relation to the Conference on Disarmament, like other States, Cyprus submitted its application to join the Conference more than two decades ago. Regrettably, no enlargement of the Conference has taken place since 1999, although, according to the rules of procedure, the membership of the Conference will be reviewed at regular intervals. We continue to support the view that expanding the Conference will give a new impetus to its work.

We are also alarmed by the recent actions taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Bearing in mind that the risks posed by nuclear weapons are too great to ignore, and fully understanding the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of their use, we have always supported the need for international dialogue, cooperation and inclusiveness in the pursuit of common objectives.

In that regard, Cyprus supported the initiative on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and we are reviewing the possibility of future accession. I take this opportunity to congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons for having been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and for its tireless efforts, which contributed significantly to the adoption of the Treaty.

My delegation would like once more to voice its commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which remains the cornerstone of global non-proliferation efforts. We also underline the vital importance of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The commitment of Cyprus to non-proliferation and disarmament is also reflected in its efforts to be vigilant of the threat posed by the spread of weapons of mass destruction in the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, as well as through its continuous support for the collective initiatives to keep outer space safe and free from conflict.

In conclusion, let me express once more the hope, Sir, that under your leadership the First Committee will advance its important agenda, thereby contributing to the overall goal of a more peaceful and safer world.

Mrs. Pucarinho (Portugal): On behalf of Portugal, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee and to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation.

Portugal fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

Portugal strongly believes that multilateralism based on universal rules and values is the most effective way of addressing our common security challenges, manage shared disarmament responsibilities and devise collective non-proliferation initiatives. More than ever, multilateralism is essential for addressing new and old threats to peace and security as those threats become increasingly global. Therefore, we need a strong United Nations that is a key actor in effective multilateralism. It should be the main agent of multilateral cooperation and a promoter of peace and security. That is why Portugal strongly believes that the United Nations should play a more relevant role.

There is growing anxiety about nuclear weapons, as we are being confronted with a very serious challenge to the global non-proliferation regime. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is accelerating its nuclear and ballistic missile programme. Such actions are in total defiance of international law and represent clear violations of Security Council resolutions. They pose a grave threat to regional and international peace and security. In September, North Korea carried out its sixth nuclear test, which was firmly condemned by the Portuguese Government. The nuclear and ballistic missile programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea serves to underscore the urgency of achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We strongly urge North Korea to cease all of its nuclear and ballistic

activities and open the way for a diplomatic resolution of the crisis.

Recent developments also serve to underline the crucial importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and its verification regime. They also remind us all of the urgency of its entry into force. Once again, Portugal reiterates its appeal to all States that have not yet done so, especially the remaining eight States listed in annex 2, to sign and ratify the CTBT.

Portugal reaffirms its support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear programme. The Plan has proved that highly complex issues can be resolved in good faith through diplomacy, provided that there is political will to do so from all parties. We must ensure that that historic agreement is strictly implemented by all parties and that conditions are met to continue monitoring Iran's nuclear programme after 2025.

Once again, Portugal reaffirms its commitment to the call of a world free of nuclear weapons. It is a moral imperative. My country shares some of the concerns and frustration regarding the lack of concrete steps taken with respect to nuclear disarmament, which, in turn, led many of the countries present today to reach an agreement on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. But we are not convinced that it represents a realistic way to achieve our common goal. In our view, a process of gradually reducing the number of nuclear weapons, while taking into account legitimate national and international security concerns, continues to be the best approach to ensure sustainable progress in multilateral disarmament negotiations.

Portugal considers the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, the foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and an important element in the future development of peaceful applications of nuclear energy. We will undertake every effort to achieve a substantive outcome to the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

Portugal is also convinced of the urgent need to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and to achieve progress in nuclear disarmament verification.

Seventeen years have elapsed since the last expansion of the Conference on Disarmament (CD). Ever since, the door has remained closed to the admission of new States, like mine, which throughout

the years have reaffirmed consistently their interest in becoming full parties to the Conference. Portugal once again urges all States to address the issue of CD membership as a decisive step towards its revitalization, and thereby contribute to overcoming the Conference's agonizing stalemate.

Portugal commends and supports the continuation of the work carried out in a very complex and challenging security situation by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism in Syria. The confirmation by the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission of the use of chemical weapons in 2016 and 2017 is cause for grave concern. We reiterate that any use of chemical weapons is intolerable and must be condemned in the strongest terms, and that those responsible must be held accountable.

The twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction reminds us that, despite the remarkable progress achieved, we are still far from achieving the objective of a world free of anti-personnel mines and in which there are no new victims by 2025. Portugal calls upon every State to do its utmost to support and promote the universalization and implementation of the Convention and the Maputo Action Plan.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) has the potential to be a very effective instrument against the illicit threat posed by conventional arms and ammunition, especially in regions in conflict and in countries with high levels of armed conflict. The Treaty will also contribute to human rights protection and to the advancement of the Sustainable Development Goals. We would like to highlight in particular the need for the implementation of the provisions of the ATT on gender-based violence, as part of the broader effort to consider a gender perspective in disarmament discussions. Portugal urges all States that have not yet done so to join the ATT.

Small arms and light weapons are the most significant and widespread instruments of violence and death worldwide. Their illicit traffic causes tremendous human suffering and fuels organized crime, terrorism and regional instability. Portugal shares the concerns of international community about the very negative consequences of unregulated flows of arms in some of the more vulnerable countries and regions.

On new and emerging threats — such as with regard to armed drones, autonomous weapons, cyberspace and the militarization of outer space — we should encourage transparency, adopt applicable international laws and develop new regulatory multilateral security frameworks aimed at the protection of civilians and human rights.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Portugal's unequivocal belief in the need to consider and uphold international humanitarian law and human rights in all disarmament and non-proliferation discussions and initiatives, which is a duty entrusted to us by our shared humanity and the principles of the Organization.

Mr. Al Saad (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin my statement by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee, as it gives us pleasure that a brotherly Arab country holds the honour of guiding the work of the Disarmament and International Security Committee. I reaffirm the readiness of my country's delegation to cooperate with you for the success of your duties.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the delegation of Yemen on behalf of the Group of Arab States and by the delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is committed to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law as fundamental pillars of its foreign policy. We attach special importance to strengthening the role of the United Nations in all areas, in particular with regard to issues of international security and disarmament. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia believes that such issues represent an integrated whole without which the world cannot live in peace and stability.

The strengthening of international peace and security requires genuine political will and strong determination from all the countries of the world, in particular those in possession of nuclear weapons, so as to forego reliance on nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction as instruments of national security. In that context, my country welcomes the adoption this year of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and hopes that it will contribute to the promotion of international peace and security and the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction in all the States of the world without exception.

While many areas of the world have succeeded in establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones thanks to cooperation by the countries of the regions concerned and their understanding that coexistence is inevitable, we note that the Middle East region continues to defy international and regional efforts to make it a zone free of nuclear weapons. That is due to Israel's intransigence and refusal of any efforts in that direction. It is quite unfortunate that, despite the existence of international consensus in that regard and an urgent desire in the region to make the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons, Israel remains the sole country obstructing the fulfilment of the desire of the peoples of the region to live in a zone free of the nuclear threat.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia regrets the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference to reach agreement on an outcome document. That failure disrupted efforts aimed at establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Moreover, it calls into question the credibility of the Treaty and may encourage countries in the region to engage in a race to acquire nuclear weapons.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia emphasizes the importance of Iran's commitment to the nuclear agreement signed with the five permanent members of the Security Council and Germany, and stresses the role of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in that regard. We also stress the need to implement an effective verification mechanism for the implementation of the agreement, inspection and control, as well as to re-impose sanctions swiftly and effectively in the event that Iran violates its obligations under the agreement. We also stress the importance of Iran signing all nuclear safety instruments and meeting all the environmental concerns of the countries in the region. We also call on Iran to implement Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), on ballistic missiles and other weapons. We express our emphatic condemnation about Iran's continued launching of ballistic missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reaffirms the inherent right of all States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy in accordance with the standards and guidelines of the IAEA and under its supervision. We also support the call to facilitate the transfer of technology, expertise and equipment related to the acquisition of atomic energy for peaceful uses. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons focuses on three pillars: the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the

removal of existing ones and the facilitation of using atomic energy for peaceful purposes. In addition, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia urges industrialized countries to cooperate and remove any obstacles hampering the transfer of relevant technology to developing countries.

My country stresses the importance of implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention, as we were among the first countries to accede to the relevant international treaties. The Kingdom has established a competent national body to oversee the implementation of the Conventions on chemical and biological weapons. In that regard, we condemn the continued use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime and its massacres against the unarmed Syrian people. The fifth report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (see S/2017/131) documented the responsibility of the Syrian regime for three such incidents.

Furthermore, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia condemns last April's chemical-weapon attack by Syrian regime forces against the town of Khan Shaykhun, in the northern governorate of Idlib. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia calls for those responsible for such a criminal act to be held accountable, as it represents a flagrant challenge to all international laws and ethical and humanitarian principles, in addition to violating the Convention of the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 2118 (2013) and 2209 (2015), on the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which urges all States to strengthen cooperation to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in order to impede terrorist groups from accessing materials needed to manufacture or produce weapons of mass destruction. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has submitted its reports as required under the resolution and has held national and international workshops to raise awareness about and support the implementation of the resolution.

My country emphasizes the importance of implementing the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects so as to enhance the capacity of Member States to combat this dangerous phenomenon and prevent non-State actors from accessing such weapons. In that regard, my

Government hopes that international consensus will be achieved at the third Review Conference, to be held in 2018.

My country stresses the importance of limiting the use of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes. The relevant international agreements have played a positive role in the promotion of the peaceful use of outer space and organizing the activities there. It must be taken into account that outer space is the common heritage of all humankind. Therefore, any efforts to regulate the use of outer space should not limit the inherent right of all States to its peaceful use.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia underscores the importance of multilateral international cooperation to strengthen information security and secure national interests on the Internet.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia firmly believes that, with international will, we are capable of arriving at radical solutions to all of obstacles in the way of resolving many of the issues addressed by the First Committee.

Mr. Gertze (Namibia): I take great pleasure in joining others who spoke before me in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. I wish to assure you of my delegation's full support. I also wish to congratulate other members of the Bureau on their election.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

The three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — the peaceful use of nuclear energy, non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament — are essential instruments to strengthen international peace and security. Namibia wishes to stress that nuclear disarmament should remain a priority on the agenda of the First Committee. We once again renew our strong call on the nuclear-weapon States to fully comply with their legal obligations and unequivocal undertakings to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons without further delay in a transparent, irreversible and internationally verifiable manner. It is essential that all non-nuclear-weapon States be provided with universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legal binding assurances by all

nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

Improving or modernizing existing nuclear weapons, including developing new types, contradicts the objective of achieving nuclear disarmament. Like many other States parties to the NPT, Namibia regrets the failure of the ninth Review Conference to reach consensus on an outcome document, despite the efforts made by many delegations.

Namibia remains a committed signatory to the Treaty of Pelindaba, which provides a shield for Africa by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting testing of those destructive weapons. In the same vein, Namibia joins those who are calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and expresses concern over the fact that commitments and obligations under the Action Plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, regarding the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, have not been implemented.

With regard to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), Namibia believes that it is important to achieve universality in adherence, which will result in the early entry into force of the Treaty. The CTBT is an instrument to halt the further development or proliferation of nuclear weapons, thereby contributing to the goal of nuclear disarmament. Accordingly, we welcome the convening of the tenth Conference on Facilitating Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held here in New York on 20 September. We urge the remaining annex 2 countries to sign and ratify the CTBT.

We welcome the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted on 7 July. Mindful of the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, we believe that the full implementation of the Treaty will guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons by ensuring their total elimination. We furthermore reiterate the need for all States to comply at all times with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law. Any use of nuclear weapons is a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and a crime against humanity. The total elimination of nuclear weapons and the assurance that they will never be produced again is the only unqualified assurance against the catastrophic

humanitarian consequences arising from the use of such weapons.

The principal responsibility for nuclear safety rests with individual States, and therefore the responsibility for nuclear security rests within the State concerned. Multilateral norms, guidelines and rules on nuclear security should be pursued within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It is our conviction that measures and initiatives aimed at strengthening nuclear safety and nuclear security must not be used as a pretext to deny or restrict the inalienable right of developing countries to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Namibia rejects and calls for the immediate removal of any limitations or restrictions on exports of nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes to developing countries, consistent with the provisions of the relevant multilateral treaties. In that regard, we wish to stress that technical cooperation and assistance provided by the IAEA to meet the material, equipment and technology needs of its member States for the peaceful use of nuclear energy shall not be subject to any conditions that are incompatible with the Statute of the IAEA.

We reaffirm that nuclear disarmament is of the highest priority. We remain concerned by the threat to humankind that is posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible testing, use or threat of use. The situation in the realm of nuclear disarmament continues to be characterized by an impasse, as the nuclear-weapon States have not made progress in eliminating nuclear weapons.

Namibia joins and welcomes the successful conclusion of the nuclear negotiations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the E3+3, which resulted in the finalization of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on 14 July 2015. In that regard, we take note of the report by the Director General of the IAEA to the Board of Governors that notes that the Agency can verify that the Islamic Republic of Iran is complying with the JCPOA. We call on the other parties to the agreement to honour their responsibility by abiding by the JCPOA.

Finally, we wish to highlight that multilateral disarmament negotiations will achieve tangible results only if, and when, we can generate the necessary political will to support the process.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of this important Committee during this session.

The Syrian delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

We are meeting once again in extremely complex and dangerous circumstances. The world is facing numerous challenges, topped by the development of existing nuclear arsenals and the threat of the use of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In addition, terrorism, which we have often warned against, continues to expand, resulting in the loss of an increasing number of innocent lives, sowing death and destruction and devastating the world unremittingly. The most worrying aspect in that regard is the fact that certain Member States, unfortunately including permanent members of the Security Council, sponsor terrorism as a political weapon. Those States sponsor terrorist groups that are included in the Security Council lists and use chemical weapons.

The United States and Great Britain failed the 2015 NPT Review Conference, because they insisted on defending Israel, its possession of nuclear weapons and its non-accession to the NPT, which is in gross violation of all provisions of the NPT. Such behaviour is part of the deceitful nuclear policies of those two nuclear-weapon States. The fact that the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Germany, Australia and other Western countries continue to defend Israel's nuclear programme and contribute to its development, promotion and protection from international accountability has encouraged Israel to simply defy the international will, develop its nuclear arsenal and not accede to the NPT.

In that context, my country reiterates its call to Member States to work towards making the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. I should like to recall the initiative that we launched at the end of 2003, when we were a non-permanent member of the Security Council. That is an initiative that we continue to call on the Council to adopt. We also call for pressure to be exerted on Israel so that it accedes to the NPT as a non-nuclear party, while placing all of its nuclear facilities and activities

under the surveillance of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Government of my country condemns in the strongest terms the crime of using chemical weapons. My country has acceded to the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons because of its belief that the Middle East should be a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, primarily the Israeli nuclear weapons, and as a proof to the entire world that we are against all uses of chemical weapons.

My country, Syria, has honoured all of its commitments resulting from its accession to that Convention and has complied with its obligations, despite our harsh and difficult circumstances. Those facts are all confirmed by the Chair of the Joint Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations, Ms. Sigrid Kaag, in her report to the Security Council of June 2014 (see S/2014/444).

Terrorist groups in Syria are still obtaining toxic chemical substances, which they prepare, assemble with the aid of intelligence services well-known to everybody and use against civilians and the military in my country. Some States that still sponsor those terrorist groups continue to give them orders to use toxic chemical substances so as to make accusations against the Syrian Government. The latest was the Khan Shaykhun incident, a cheap attempt to blackmail the Syrian Government in international forums.

In the context of our constant and transparent cooperation with the OPCW, my country wrote a letter to the OPCW Director General that called for an independent and impartial technical mission to be sent to Khan Shaykhun and the Shayrat air base to assess what happened there in a comprehensive, transparent and honest way. However, we were not surprised by the pressure that was exerted by some Western States, spearheaded by the United States, the United Kingdom and France, to prevent such an independent OPCW technical mission from being sent to Khan Shaykhun and the Shayrat air base. In addition, those States prevented the fact-finding mission from going there in the same way as they prevented Mr. Åke Sellström from going to Khan Al-Asal in 2013. My country is the first to be interested in knowing the truth about what happened. It seems that all of these very important details were missed by the representative of the Bani Saud regime because he does not read and does not

follow up. In any case, we will use our right of reply to respond to him.

The Syrian Arab Republic has sent more than 124 letters to the Secretary-General, the Security Council, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and the committees concerning counter-terrorism. I hope, Mr. President, that you have heard the right figure, which is 124 letters that were sent before the first chemical attack against Khan Al-Asal in March 2013 — by four months. In all those letters, we pointed to our apprehensions that States supporting terrorism would provide chemical weapons to terrorist groups, and then claim that it was Syria that had used those weapons.

By way of these letters, we informed all those whom I mentioned about the use of toxic substances by terrorist organizations against civilians and military personnel. The toxic substances were transferred from Libya through the intelligence services of countries hostile to mine. In addition, the Turkish intelligence services provided Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front with toxic chemical substances across the Turkish border, with the direct support of the Bandar Bin Sultan organization. We sent many letters to the Joint Investigation Mechanism and to the Security Council about the involvement of the regime in Qatar, which instructed the terrorist groups that it finances to use chlorine gas and other toxic chemical substances in areas under their control and to document those actions with photos and videos, with the intention of accusing the Syrian Arab Army of doing so. In addition, some States have established a media arm for the armed terrorist groups, which they named the White Helmets, and granted it an Oscar award.

In conclusion, we underscore that Member States should shoulder their responsibility to stop smuggling all kinds of arms and ammunition and related material, lethal or non-lethal, and stop the smuggling of insurgents and terrorists across the borders of countries neighbouring Syria. In that regard, we warn that, sooner or later, the scourge of terrorism will backfire on the Governments of those States that finance terrorism and on other States.

Mr. Sembayev (Kazakhstan): Allow me to first congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the chairmanship of the First Committee. The delegation of Kazakhstan

will offer you and the Bureau its full support and any necessary assistance.

The current session of the First Committee has begun in difficult circumstances. Tensions in international relations have not only increased, but have also taken on new forms. Issues that we once thought had been successfully addressed are once again on the agenda. Disarmament and security are critical to ensuring peace and stability. Some believe that the establishment of peace is a precondition for nuclear disarmament. Others are making progress towards nuclear disarmament as the basis for achieving peace. Our vision is that disarmament and peace should be pursued in parallel based on mutual trust. That is the primary goal of the United Nations — the eradication of war and conflicts. In his manifesto, “The World, The Twenty-first century”, President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan clearly outlined several options for the future, which depends entirely on us. Either we surrender to the virus of war, or we eradicate it completely and move towards a new level of collective thinking based on unity and trust.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are the main priorities of Kazakhstan's foreign policy. We consistently stand for nuclear disarmament and strict adherence to the principle of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, alongside the inalienable right of States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We express our deep concern about the fact that, while in general the non-nuclear-weapon States are fulfilling their commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the nuclear-weapon States are not taking decisive action to rid themselves of nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, we take note of the fact that some nuclear-weapon States have made efforts aimed at reducing the number of nuclear arsenals.

As a country that voluntarily renounced the world's fourth-largest nuclear arsenal, the Republic of Kazakhstan believes that the nuclear-weapon States must continue to reduce their nuclear arsenals until they are fully eliminated. The indefinite extension of the NPT, in 1995, should not be considered to be a basis for the indefinite extension of the existence of nuclear weapons. We are convinced that, in our interdependent and connected world, nuclear weapons are no longer an asset but a danger. With that in mind, we are considering the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Following its entry into force, the new Treaty will

complement the NPT and serve as another pillar in establishing a world free of nuclear weapons.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is one of the most effective means to prevent proliferation. The President of Kazakhstan proposes to unite the efforts of all States composing the nuclear-weapon-free zones to provide the impetus to expand such zones throughout the world. They play an important role in establishing regional and international peace and stability, while advancing disarmament processes and strengthening the NPT regime. It is critical that we make every effort to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones around the world, including in the Middle East, North-East Asia, Europe and the Arctic.

The early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is in the basic security interests of all nations. North Korea's continued nuclear tests should compel us to ensure the early entry into force of the CTBT. It is essential that a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices be developed as soon as possible within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. The future treaty could have the added value of the inclusion of existing fissile material stocks, but that is not a prerequisite for beginning negotiations or predicting results.

My country fully supports and strictly implements Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), as it is crucial to ensuring the proper implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Kazakhstan attaches great importance to that historic agreement, which is recognized as a momentous achievement in the area multilateral diplomacy of recent decades. Implementing the JCPOA has had a significant impact on normalizing the situation in and beyond the region. The JCPOA was achieved as a result of intensive and lengthy negotiations. It must be acknowledged that that agreement has put Iran on a nuclear-free path, with the International Atomic Energy Agency confirming that Iran is fulfilling all its obligations with regard to nuclear aspects.

Last year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention culminated in the adoption of a fundamentally weak outcome document. The upcoming Meeting of the States Parties in December has a clear mandate. We are confident that everyone agrees on the need to strengthen the Convention's regime. We believe that outcomes from

the December meeting will lay a solid foundation for the future.

Last year, we witnessed the complete destruction of all the chemical weapons exported from Syria, in accordance with the norms of the Chemical Weapons Convention. That was another example of increasing mutual trust. At the same time, information about cases of terrorists using chemicals or chemical weapons in Syria is alarming. Russia's proposal at the Conference on Disarmament to develop an international convention for suppressing acts of chemical terrorism is relevant and timely. We welcome Russia's elimination of its last stockpile of chemical weapons on 27 September.

In terms of new trends, we note that the rapid development of new technologies affects all aspects of security, including disarmament and non-proliferation. The relevance and complexity of the issue became apparent at the most recent nuclear discussion forum organized by the Republic of Kazakhstan and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. Advances in 3D printing, cybersecurity, cyberweapons, artificial intelligence and fully autonomous weapons present new challenges that require immediate responses.

On 1 January, the Republic of Kazakhstan began its mandate as a non-permanent member on the Security Council. We recognize the great responsibility that comes with our seat on the Council. We will strive to strengthen Security Council member States' understanding of the importance of establishing a renewed, twenty-first-century model for relations among States. That will assist in ensuring that global and regional challenges are solved through collective responsibility. We must unite our efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons by 2045 — the 100th anniversary of the United Nations — as proposed by President Nazarbayev during his address to the General Assembly at its seventieth session, in September 2015 (see A/70/PV.13). We urge all countries that are striving to acquire nuclear weapons to join us with reinvigorated momentum so as to achieve that noble goal together.

Mr. Denktaş (Turkey): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your election, Sir, and assure you of my delegation's full support in your work.

Perhaps there never is an easy time in non-proliferation and disarmament, but recently we have been faced with ever more concerning threats to our collective security and global peace. While the global nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation

architecture is being challenged by the nuclear tests and ballistic-missile launches of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and as the appalling use of chemical weapons in Syria breaks a long-standing norm against the use of such weapons, the growing polarization in the area of nuclear disarmament distracts our energy from the imminent and serious challenges facing us. With its provocative nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stands before us as an alarming case. Turkey calls upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fulfil its obligations under Security Council resolutions and to refrain from actions that would further escalate the tensions and undermine the prospects for nuclear disarmament.

Turkey appreciates the virtues of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The JCPOA stands before us as an example of the effectiveness of multilateral diplomacy in advancing the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Turkey is fully committed to the shared goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We recognize that there is no easy shortcut to a nuclear-weapon-free world. We strongly support the NPT, which we see as the centrepiece mechanism of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We will not support any action that could undermine it. Both on a national basis and together with its Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative partners, Turkey is ready to work for rebuilding the trust and environment of dialogue that are necessary for progress on nuclear disarmament.

We reaffirm the urgency of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. It is our firm belief that the commencement of negotiations in Geneva on a fissile material cut-off treaty would also be a significant contribution to non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. Nuclear-disarmament verification would be another.

On the other hand, we regret the fact that the convening of an international conference for the establishment of a Middle East zone free from weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) has not materialized.

Turkey attaches great significance to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The use of chemical weapons, be it in Syria or elsewhere, by States and non-State actors alike, is a crime against humanity, a

violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and an affront to the CWC. To prevent the use of such weapons again, the international community must ensure that there is no impunity with regard to such actions.

Turkey does not possess any weapons covered under the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. While we welcome additional accessions to the Convention, we are not satisfied with the outcome of the eighth Review Conference.

The threats posed by the proliferation of illicit conventional weapons is no less important than that of WMDs. More than 500,000 people are killed with small arms and light weapons every year. Turkey remains committed to the effective implementation and further strengthening of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument. We also attach importance to the Arms Trade Treaty.

Security in cyberspace and outer space are equally important and deserve our full attention. Turkey is disappointed by the fact that the fifth Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security ended its work without agreement. In recent years, Turkey has remarkably strengthened its national legislation and international cooperation in this area. We look forward to contributing to the work on this topic either within a possible consecutive group or any other format.

Turkey is also committed to the peaceful uses of outer space. As we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty, this week the Government of Turkey submitted to its Parliament draft legislation that sets up a Turkish space agency.

Having summarized the challenges we are facing, we should also acknowledge the encouraging developments that took place in the disarmament machinery in the past year. First of all, as other delegations have underlined in their statements, by succeeding in arriving at a consensus on recommendations in the United Nations Disarmament Commission, we have broken a deadlock of almost two decades. Also, agreement in the Open-ended Working Group on recommendations on the objectives and agenda of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament must not be overlooked. These are significant developments

and renew confidence in our ability to proceed with consensus to jointly tackle the security challenges ahead. Turkey has strongly supported those efforts and is determined to maintain that level of support in the days ahead.

Mr. Altidju (Cameroon): At the outset, allow me to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I would like to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and support in ensuring a successful conclusion to our deliberations.

Disarmament, non-proliferation and security remain at the top of the international community's concerns. In this time of international turbulence, it must be said that nuclear disarmament is still a hot topic today, given the multiple crises and conflicts spread out around the world. The international threat caused by the potential use of nuclear weapons remains very high, and the regime put in place to control them remains incomplete. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has not yet entered into force. Negotiations have not started on fissile materials or negative security assurances.

In the category of conventional weapons, Cameroon is of the view that small arms and light weapons, anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions continue to fuel armed violence. The instruments created to tackle the challenges posed by those weapons have yet to be consolidated, universalized and implemented effectively. While the security challenges associated with disarmament are numerous and will continue to raise serious concerns around the world until they are adequately addressed, we believe that the positive results obtained over the years demonstrate how we can advance the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda when there is a constructive and pragmatic state of mind. In that regard, Cameroon believes that the quest for a safer world must be tackled in a comprehensive way and efforts to achieve it must be undertaken in all areas — nuclear, chemical, biological, conventional, ballistic proliferation and space.

For its part, Cameroon attaches great importance to realistic multilateral efforts in the field of disarmament, has consistently supported initiatives to promote the limitation of nuclear weapons and the reduction of nuclear proliferation, and remains committed to upholding its obligations in the overall effort to ensure a world free of weapons of mass destruction. Through

its adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and its Additional Protocol, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, to name only a few, my country has demonstrated its determination to contribute to the creation of a peaceful world without weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, on the basis of agreements freely concluded among the States of the region concerned, such as the Pelindaba Treaty for an Africa free of nuclear weapons. Yet, although we are resolutely and fully engaged on disarmament and non-proliferation, for developing countries such as Cameroon it is the need to control small arms and light weapons, and the new threats caused by terrorism and violent extremism, that are of the utmost importance.

(spoke in French)

With regard to combating small arms and light weapons, my country welcomes the entry into force, on 8 March, of the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, known as the Kinshasa Convention. Its implementation will further bring our regions closer to the goal of silencing weapons by 2020, as set out by the African Union in its strategy Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020. Cameroon has also strengthened its national arms-control legislation by adopting a law aimed at establishing a general arms control regime in Cameroon.

With regard to combating terrorism, Boko Haram remains a serious threat at the regional level. However, thanks to outstanding cooperation among the countries of the Chad Lake basin, a serious blow has been dealt to that terrorist group, although it has not completely lost its ability to cause trouble.

The current international context clearly shows that no State in the world is immune to terrorism. That is why Cameroon welcomes the establishment, on 15 June, of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, which paves the way for more coordinated and consistent actions in the framework of the United Nations system. The Office will make it possible to better assist States in their fight against this scourge and strengthen their capabilities in managing the consequences of terrorism.

In the same vein, my country would like to be able to rely on the international community for support in its just struggle against Boko Haram. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the significant contribution

provided by our partners. My country once again calls for greater international solidarity.

Mr. Khoo (Singapore): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau on your election. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu on her appointment and her dedication to advancing disarmament efforts.

Singapore aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

In January 2017, *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* shifted the minute hand of its Doomsday Clock to two and a half minutes to midnight, signifying its opinion that the world is at its closest to global catastrophe in two decades. Urgent, collective and decisive action is needed. The First Committee must be used as a platform to galvanize such action.

The international security environment remains very challenging, and there have been a number of developments of concern.

First, Singapore is gravely concerned about the recent missile launches and nuclear tests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Such provocative actions severely threaten the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula and the world. In September 2017, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers unanimously deplored the nuclear test of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and strongly urged the country to immediately halt actions that violate resolutions of the Security Council and return to the negotiating table. Singapore reiterates its support for the peaceful denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, as well as its long-standing call for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abide by its international obligations and commitments. Singapore urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Secondly, we are concerned about the looming risks of a radiological attack by terrorists or non-State actors. Earlier this year, authorities in our region arrested eight people connected to the theft of iridium-192, a radioactive material used to make dirty bombs. We cannot discount the possibility that terrorist groups could carry out a nuclear or radiological terror attack.

National measures must be adopted, and international cooperation intensified, to counter such threats. For our part, Singapore adopted the Terrorism (Suppression of Misuse of Radioactive Material) Act in May 2017, paving the way for its ratification of the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts against Nuclear Terrorism in August 2017.

Thirdly, cyberattacks remain a clear and present danger. Such attacks adversely impact essential services, trade and commerce, as well as the lives of ordinary people. Yet work at the United Nations to build on global norms to ensure a secure, resilient and economically vibrant cyberspace has stalled. It is unfortunate that the latest iteration of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security could not agree on a substantive report. That reflects the divergences in perspectives on how we can collectively preserve cyberspace as a peaceful, safe and secure domain.

More dialogue is required to bridge those differences. We need to step up efforts to forge consensus on a set of global norms on cyberspace and enhance regional and international cooperation on cybersecurity. Singapore is committed to doing its part to preserve a rules-based cyberspace. In September, we hosted the second iteration of the Singapore International Cyber Week to continue dialogue on this important issue. A key event was the second ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity, which saw representation from all ASEAN member States. During the meeting, ASEAN member States agreed on the importance of enhancing coordination to ensure ASEAN's cybersecurity efforts are focused, effective and synergetic. My delegation will elaborate on this issue during the relevant thematic debate.

Despite those challenges, there has been some positive momentum on disarmament in the past year. First, for the first time in close to 20 years, the United Nations Disarmament Commission reached consensus on a substantive set of recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. Secondly, the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV), skilfully steered by Mr. Fernando Luque Márquez of Ecuador, defied expectations by agreeing on the objectives and agenda of a future SSOD-IV. Thirdly, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was

adopted in July 2017. We especially thank the core group, as well as civil society, for spearheading this movement, which was catalysed by the collective desire to avoid the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons.

While we regret that our concerns on the Treaty were not fully taken on board, the adoption of the Treaty, as well as the subsequent signings and ratifications, have demonstrated that the majority of the international community is united in the belief that nuclear weapons should be prohibited. As we look ahead to the Treaty's eventual entry into force, it will be important for the international community to find a realistic and complementary role for the Treaty within the existing global disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

At the same time, Singapore reiterates its resolute support of the NPT and its three pillars. The NPT remains the cornerstone of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Mutually reinforcing progress on disarmament and non-proliferation is essential to strengthening international peace and security. The first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of States Parties to the NPT in May this year made little substantive headway. We hope that States parties can achieve more concrete and actionable outcomes at the second Preparatory Committee session, to be held in Geneva next year, as part of our collective effort to uphold the legitimacy and relevance of the NPT.

Singapore remains fully committed to the ultimate goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. We have a responsibility to our future generations and will continue to support efforts to make concrete and meaningful progress. As eloquently put by Secretary-General António Guterres, there are multiple pathways to a nuclear-weapon-free world. Naturally, meaningful progress in nuclear disarmament will be possible only when all the relevant parties, particularly those possessing nuclear weapons, join in the global effort. We echo the Secretary-General's call for inclusive dialogue, renewed international cooperation and, above all, practical measures for irreversible, verifiable and universal nuclear disarmament.

Three swallows do not make a summer. While those developments are undoubtedly significant, they are not ends in themselves. More work is needed to find common ground and bridge divergences of opinion in order to reach our ultimate objectives. Potential avenues

to build on the positive momentum include the high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament, in 2018; SSOD-IV, which has yet to be scheduled; and continued discussions on cybersecurity in an inclusive manner at the United Nations.

In conclusion, unlike the regular passage of time, we have the opportunity to wind back the Doomsday Clock. We must strive to do so, especially during this session of the First Committee. For our part, Singapore will continue to work constructively with all parties towards a successful outcome of the First Committee.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to start by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the of the First Committee at the seventy-second session. We are convinced that your exceptional skills and experience will lead to the success of the Committee's work. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and wish all of them every success. I would like as well to thank the previous Chair, the Permanent Representative of sisterly Algeria, for his efforts to steer the Committee during the seventy-first session.

My country's delegation associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

The Kingdom of Bahrain underscores its firm position with regard to disarmament and international security. The foundations for peace, security and stability in the world will not be established so long as nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction exist, as they threaten international peace and security. In that context, the Kingdom of Bahrain appreciates the pivotal role of the United Nations and its specialized agencies in the field of disarmament in bringing about global stability, given the challenges that face many regions of the world.

Bahrain underscores the need for universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty while respecting the right of all nations to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Israel must implement the resolution adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons regarding the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We also stress that Iran must implement Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), on nuclear agreement, and must

abide by the international safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

We welcome the Security Council's unanimous adoption of resolution 2375 (2017), regarding new sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which continues its nuclear and ballistic-missile testing, thereby threatening neighbouring States and international peace and security.

My delegation affirms the inalienable right of all States parties to benefit from nuclear technology and to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination, in accordance with articles I and II of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We stress the importance of ensuring that space activities is pursued for peaceful purposes. We must also commit ourselves to the relevant legal and international conventions that lay the foundations for preventing the militarization of outer space, which is the joint heritage of humankind and should never be used to threaten security and peace in the world.

The Kingdom of Bahrain expresses its full commitment to working with you, Sir, and with the other members of the Committee towards achieving progress in all issues related to disarmament and international security.

Mr. Mendoza-García (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election to guide the work of the First Committee. You can count on our full support during this session.

We take this opportunity once again to take stock of the most important achievements and challenges currently facing the international community in the areas of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. We see that the world is immersed in an environment of instability and that international peace and security are threatened on a daily basis. Yet this session is also different from previous ones: we have taken a decisive step forward as the international community so that in the near future we can contemplate a world free of nuclear weapons. The recent adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons represents a milestone for hope because it has allowed us to close a gap in international law by categorically prohibiting nuclear weapons, including their use and the threat of use. This prohibition plays a fundamental

role towards their irreversible, verifiable and transparent elimination.

As a country, we are pleased to have been able to contribute positively to that process, which was strengthened by the persistence of civil society and the victims of the use and testing of nuclear weapons. We take this opportunity to congratulate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), which worked tirelessly to draw the world's attention to the humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. We commend its efforts to achieve a treaty prohibiting this kind of weapons. ICAN's hard work bore fruit on 7 July. The Nobel Peace Prize is a well-deserved acknowledgement of ICAN's tireless struggle, as well as that of civil society and the victims of the use and testing of nuclear weapons, to put an end to nuclear bombs.

We are pleased that the process was inclusive, interactive and cooperative, and that it received valuable input from international organizations, academics and scientists. We regret that the nuclear-weapon States and members of the security alliance decided to disassociate themselves from the process. In nuclear disarmament, inaction is not an option. Maintaining the status quo will lead only to an increasingly dangerous situation of insecurity and bring humankind closer to its own annihilation. We know that the premise that security arises from the strength of weapons is false.

At the current unstable juncture, we urge all States to adhere to the Treaty, which we know is not a total solution to the challenges we face as an international community, but which does allow us to take a decisive step towards the delegitimization of nuclear weapons and to strengthen the legal and political standards against their use. The international community has made a strong and clear call for all States, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to eliminate the use of nuclear weapons from their political and security doctrines and military strategies.

We also welcome the progress made in the United Nations Disarmament Commission, which after decades of stagnation adopted recommendations on practical measures for confidence-building in the area of conventional weapons. We are pleased that the Open-ended Working Group achieved consensus on the agenda and objectives for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We hope we can continue making progress in the various

work areas and continue to take small, but decisive, steps forward in the area of disarmament.

Nonetheless, we do not want to ignore the fact that there is still a long way to go. Scant progress has been made in the implementation of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has not entered into force and there is a constant threat of the use of nuclear weapons, all of which is a source of serious concern. We therefore reiterate the call to the nuclear-weapon States to maintain their unequivocal commitment to disarmament in the light of article VI of the NPT. Compliance with the Treaty is not conditional or optional, but rather compulsory.

We consider it unacceptable that some nuclear-weapon States, despite having signed and ratified important disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, spend billions of dollars on the development and modernization of nuclear weapons, thereby undermining the spirit and purpose of those treaties. It is therefore imperative to halt the disproportionate investments made to modernize and extend the useful life of nuclear arsenals and the recurrence of irresponsible acts of nuclear tests.

In that connection, we are greatly concerned by, and condemn, the continued nuclear tests carried out over recent weeks by North Korea. They jeopardize and undermine international peace and security while also endangering human life as a whole. We would call upon all those involved to avoid the escalation of aggressive rhetoric, which could have horrific and irreversible consequences that, as the international community, we vowed never again to allow. For Costa Rica, the nations most interested in prohibiting nuclear weapons are those that do not have them, because we are convinced that international peace and security cannot be based on a doctrine of nuclear deterrence.

With the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty, which establishes legally binding obligations upon States with a view to guaranteeing responsible and effective controls on international transfers of conventional weapons, munitions, parts and components, we hoped to see a substantial change in the situation on the ground. Regrettably, that has not been the case. There are still multiple and serious violations of the main aim of the Arms Trade Treaty, and, unfortunately, they mainly and directly affect the civilian population, particularly those in armed-conflict situations. Illegal transfers to

conflict zones must be halted, and anyone found to be in non-compliance with the regulations must be held accountable for their irresponsible actions.

Much remains to be done to adequately address the illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The third Review Conference on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, to be held next year, will provide an appropriate opportunity for us to take tangible action to prevent and eliminate the illicit trade in such weapons.

We condemn all use of cluster munitions, not only because their use goes against the spirit, object and letter of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, but also because their use intensifies human suffering and increases the number of humanitarian emergencies. This is why we reiterate the importance that all States should accede to the Convention and implement the Dubrovnik Action Plan.

Costa Rica belongs to the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world. We are also part of Central America, which is a region free of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions. As a small, democratic, disarmed country that respects civil law, we use the multilateral system and international law as our only defence instruments. However, peace and security require more than weapons control. We believe that the main tools to promote and guarantee national and international security are the strengthening and perfecting of democracy and the promotion and respect for the rule of law.

Finally, Costa Rica will continue to stress the need to move away from doctrines based upon a strict military basis to doctrines based upon paradigms of sustainable development and human security. We, the States Members of the United Nations, must join forces in taking initiatives to boost multilateral disarmament mechanisms and initiatives that will allow us to meet the challenges facing the international community, in particular civilians.

Ms. O'Halloran Bernstein (Ireland): I am pleased to offer my congratulations on your chairmanship, Sir, as well as to the other members of the Bureau.

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union and by the representative of Mexico, the latter on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition. I will read out an edited version

of Ireland's statement and elaborate further on some issues during the thematic session.

Ireland congratulates the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) for being awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize. The decision by the Nobel Committee to award the prize to ICAN is an important recognition of the group's untiring efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons. It also reflects the signal achievement to which their work has been such an impetus, namely, the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The award by the Nobel Committee underlines the urgency and relevance of our work in the First Committee.

The situation in the Korean peninsula has, unthinkable, brought the possibility of nuclear war back to the world stage. Nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles have been tested illegally and blatantly by the Democratic Republic of North Korea, in contravention of numerous Security Council resolutions. Ireland condemns the nuclear programme and ballistic missile testing by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea unreservedly. We strongly urge the resumption of diplomatic engagement leading to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is now more urgent than ever, and we call on all remaining annex 2 States to sign and ratify the Treaty. The international norm against nuclear testing must become legally binding.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to which Ireland is deeply committed, remains the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Last year, with Chatham House, we launched the paper entitled "Nuclear Disarmament: The Missing Link in Multilateralism." It is the first in a series of papers designed to show the linkages between nuclear disarmament and other areas of high-level global concern. During this session of the First Committee, we will launch another element of that work, entitled "Nuclear Weapons and the Protection of Cultural Heritage."

Ireland welcomes the positive and constructive approach to the work of the NPT that was evident at the Preparatory Committee session last May. However, we are particularly concerned that work on the Middle East Zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems should regain momentum, with

the involvement of all stakeholders from the region. We regard the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran as an important success for non-proliferation and for the NPT. We welcome the International Atomic Energy Agency's confirmation of its implementation.

The NPT always envisaged a separate legal instrument to give effect to its disarmament provisions. The original drafters knew that their work was not finished. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted by two thirds of the United Nations, finally fulfils the legal gap in implementing those commitments. This robust and ambitious Treaty, which transmits our powerful vision of a world free from nuclear weapons, is a result of goodwill, political leadership, engagement in good faith and strong commitment to a common goal. It shows us what the international community, States and civil society can achieve. Its content is ground-breaking, both in its core provisions, which effectively prohibit nuclear weapons, and also in its deep commitment to humanitarianism, to disarmament education, its recognition of the Hibakusha victims of atomic bombings and the importance of the full and effective participation of women in the future work of the Treaty. Ireland is proud to have been among the first signatories of the Treaty. We will move swiftly to ratify it. We urge other States to do likewise. This important instrument must enter into force as soon as possible.

Like others, we do not wish to perpetuate disagreements regarding the best path towards achieving our common goal of multilateral nuclear disarmament. Instead, we wish to concentrate on our many shared goals. Ireland will continue to work together with its partners in the New Agenda Coalition on taking forward all effective measures that assist in making our world safer from the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any nuclear detonation.

Ireland is committed to non-proliferation as well as to disarmament. We recognize the crucial role of export-control regimes in underpinning essential instruments, such as the NPT. Ireland, together with Iceland, will assume the co-chairmanship of the Missile Technology Control Regime later this month. Together with Iceland, we have engaged actively in outreach and consultation in order to ensure that we can expand and deepen the influence of such an important export-control regime.

We join other States in expressing our grave concern about the confirmed use of chemical weapons in Syria

by both the Syrian State and non-State actors. The use of those weapons, which has been long prohibited by international law, is appalling. Those responsible for such terrible crimes must be held accountable. On a positive note, we welcome the recent announcement by the Russian Federation of the verifiable destruction of its remaining chemical weapons.

Ireland strongly supports all international instruments designed to regulate and minimize humanitarian harm from the use of conventional weapons. A particularly urgent challenge that we face is civilian harm that arises from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. We must strengthen compliance with international humanitarian law as warfare becomes increasingly urbanized. We commend the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross on this question, and we support the recommendation of the Secretary-General that States ought to engage constructively in efforts to develop a political declaration on the matter.

The international community's signal successes in regulating, mitigating the use of or banning outright some conventional weapons represent the best of what can be achieved when the international community and civil society work together to establish such powerful norms. Nevertheless, there are many causes for concern. Reports of civilian casualties from landmine use on the border between Myanmar and Bangladesh border are horrifying. So is the use of cluster munitions in Yemen and Syria. Meanwhile, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is fuelling conflict and violence in many fragile States, and we must work to strengthen the United Nations Programme of Action in that area. The Arms Trade Treaty has great potential to stem the illicit trade in conventional weapons, but it requires more resources if it is to operate effectively

A diversity of voices ensures a more multifaceted and deeper discourse on disarmament matters. For years, Ireland has encouraged a more participative approach to civil society in the Committee's work. We look forward to this week's civil-society segment as an opportunity for a genuine and open exchange of views. We are equally committed to increasing women's participation in disarmament.

Our former Taoiseach, Mr. Liam Cosgrave, who died last week, addressed the United Nations in 1956 when Ireland was a very new Member of the United Nations. In that speech he said that the Assembly

represented the best hopes of humankind on Earth, that the hope of averting disasters lay in the General Assembly and that it was the future of humankind that was debated here (see A/PV.603). Let us work together so that those hopes can be realized.

Ms. McCarney (Canada): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau on your election, and to assure you of the full support of my delegation at the First Committee.

Our collective challenge here is to find ways to advance disarmament while taking account of contradictory views. We have made some very real progress, which is something that we too often unfortunately neglect to underscore. Indeed, collective action is clearly benefiting many disarmament issues. Examples include working towards a world free of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions, taking gender into account in addressing the impacts of armed violence and preventing unregulated transfers of small arms and light weapons.

The year 2017 marks the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, also known as the Ottawa Convention. In the past two decades, its 162 States parties have worked together to destroy more than 51 million mines and significantly reduce the number of new mine victims.

Canada remains optimistic that, with patience and compromise, more progress is possible, even on the most intractable of issues. In the current environment, the reckless actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are especially concerning. We welcome the Security Council's unity in responding to such threats and, while seeking a peaceful resolution, Canada calls for a more effective implementation of sanctions.

That some States might seek new ways to advance nuclear disarmament in such circumstances is understandable, although we remain unconvinced that the newly negotiated Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons will be effective. For Canada, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the cornerstone for making progress towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. We believe that greater effort is needed to build trust and reduce the tensions that fuel the reliance on nuclear weapons for national security. We support the practical and progressive work needed to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban

Treaty into force, develop negative security assurances, devise new technologies and global capabilities for credible nuclear-disarmament verification and prepare for the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT).

Last year, Canada, Germany and the Netherlands sponsored resolution 71/259, which created a high-level fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) expert preparatory group. The resolution affirmed that the FMCT remains a global priority. We are very pleased to be chairing the preparatory group and will welcome the Chair's update to the Committee this week on its progress.

Canada also believes a fully implemented Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), with its extensive verification regime, is in everyone's interest. We call on all Member States to make voluntary contributions to the International Atomic Energy Agency's efforts to monitor and verify JCPOA implementation.

If differences remain over how best to advance nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, there should be no doubt about chemical weapons. Yet in 2017 such horrible and indiscriminate weapons were used in both Syria and Iraq. We must condemn any use of chemical weapons and call on the Syrian Government to work with the Organization on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to ensure the complete declaration and destruction of its chemical-weapon stocks and production facilities. Canada's commitment to eliminating chemical weapons goes beyond words. Since 2012, Canada has contributed more than \$30 million to help destroy chemical weapons in Libya and Syria, support special missions and contingency operations in Syria and to strengthen the OPCW's rapid response assistance mission.

Canada also places high value on space security and the peaceful use of outer space. Access to space and to space-based services has become essential in the daily lives of almost all of us on the planet. As we rely more on outer space, we must also be steadfast in promoting its peaceful use and in mitigating space debris. We believe that the best, most practical way to develop needed confidence and transparency in space is through voluntary measures that solidify international norms and behaviour.

(spoke in French)

Canada welcomes the upcoming second joint meeting of the First Committee and the Fourth Committee. International solutions to the challenges posed by outer space do not rely solely on disarmament or civil cooperation. Rather, they require a comprehensive approach.

The 2013 report of the fourth session of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (see A/68/98) affirmed that international law applies to States' conduct in cyberspace. In such circumstances, Canada did not appreciate the fact that during the 2016-2017 session of the Group of Governmental Experts some States challenged the applicability of international law. For Canada, the Charter of the United Nations, including the provisions on the right of self-defence under Article 51, remains the cornerstone of peace and security at the international level. The behaviour of all States in cyberspace, as elsewhere, should be governed by international law, including the Charter, current international humanitarian law, customary international law on State responsibility, especially counter-measures, and international human rights law.

With regard to disarmament mechanisms, it has been, once again, a year of limited results. Substantive discussions were held during the Conference on Disarmament, but the participants did not agree on any measures. It is therefore easy to understand why some States, exasperated by the relative inaction, are looking for alternatives. In that regard, we look forward to taking part in the discussions on the disarmament mechanisms during the special session on disarmament in 2018.

The proliferation of conventional weapons through the illicit or unregulated arms trade is one of the greatest security challenges facing the international community. Those weapons are particularly dangerous for vulnerable populations, especially women and girls. As a result, Canada has embarked on the process of joining the Arms Trade Treaty. As I said earlier, we must collectively find ways to accelerate our disarmament efforts. If we are patient, committed and ready to compromise, together we can certainly make progress.

Ms. Flores Herrera (Panama) *(spoke in Spanish)*: Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to steer the work entrusted to the First

Committee during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. I also extend my congratulations to all the members of the Bureau. We hope for a productive session and, to that end, Sir, you can count on Panama's support.

Panama is firmly committed to strengthening the regime on disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and weapons of indiscriminate effect. Furthermore, we are steadfast in our commitment to collective efforts to promote the universality of instruments that help us overcome such serious threats to international peace and security. In that regard, my Government maintains a strong condemnation of the nuclear tests and missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as they represent a defiant attitude and clear violation of Security Council resolutions. They not only increase tensions within that region, but also pose a threat to international stability.

The global situation, which is aggravated by the escalation of tensions between countries, the challenges of international terrorism and the uptick in the number of non-State actors, increasingly demands the commitment, without exception, of the international community to address them, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Under that premise, we welcome the statement made by Secretary-General António Guterres that the Organization needs to reaffirm its commitment to nuclear disarmament and focus its action on the prevention of war and conflict.

The challenge posed by nuclear weapons is a reality, and worse yet, the growing humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons is irreversible and unquantifiable. We welcome the recent decision to confer the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize on the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons because it constitutes a powerful message from civil society in favour of nuclear disarmament to stem the consequences of the catastrophic humanitarian effects that such weapons cause.

With a strong sense of responsibility and consistent with the role played by Latin America and the Caribbean in the field of disarmament, on 20 September Panama was one of the first countries to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. That negotiation, masterfully conducted by Ambassador White of Costa Rica, paved the way for a representative majority of the

Organization to continue prioritizing multilateralism on an issue that concerns us all and, as we said then, while the Treaty may be improved upon, we took a very significant step forward for humankind.

A contrario sensu and as the country that currently holds the chair of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, Panama regrets that, two decades after the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) — the axis of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime — its universalization and implementation have not been achieved. Nevertheless, the international verification regime of the CTBT is a real-time and effective instrument that has played a key role in the detection of nuclear tests and in the provision of valuable data and scientific information to Member States. In that regard, Panama is pleased to contribute to those efforts through its RN50 station, which was recently updated and optimized. It forms part of the International Monitoring System network that aspires to count on 321 monitoring stations and 16 radionuclide laboratories.

Panama attaches particular importance to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) because they are the only legally binding, multilateral instruments that are in force within the context of global non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. As a member and current Chair of the Human Security Network, we advocate for the safety of all citizens of the world and their right to live in freedom and dignity, free from threats so as to be able to develop their full human potential. Accordingly, we are obliged to combat the brutal threat posed by weapons of mass destruction.

Fifty years after the signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, it must be acknowledged that the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) has undoubtedly been a point of reference for the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones. That is why it is our aspiration for such trend towards a safe and peaceful world continue to grow. As a member of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone and a region with proven leadership in disarmament, Panama will continue to participate in any endeavours to achieve those goals. My delegation therefore deeply regrets the additional efforts that, led by Brazil, were necessary within the Committee to secure the participation of the Secretary-General of OPANAL at the next panel on disarmament, which will be held on 11 October.

In the midst of accelerated technological development, we are losing a sense of human coexistence, which is fundamental to building peaceful and secure societies, with social cohesion and equitable prosperity. Disarmament and international cooperation should be understood as fundamental components not only of efforts to promote peace and security, but also of development. In that connection, the network of existing treaties and agreements on disarmament and non-proliferation will succeed only if they are adopted and ratified by all States.

Allow me to conclude by reiterating the importance of maintaining a multidimensional approach to security given the joint need for human rights and development as essential for the attainment of a peaceful and secure world.

Mr. Bhattarai (Nepal): First, allow me to compliment you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau of the First Committee on your respective unanimous elections. While I place my delegation's full support in your steering this session towards a productive conclusion, I also commend the Bureau of the previous session for a job well done.

I align my statement with the one made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

Nepal's unwavering commitment to disarmament and international security flows from the norms of world peace, enshrined in our Constitution as a basis for the country's foreign policy. Nepal reaffirms its principled position that universal peace and security can be ensured only through time-bound, general and complete disarmament of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. Nepal commends the Open-ended Working Group for finalizing the objectives and agenda of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. As a strong believer in the power of multilateralism in disarmament affairs, Nepal also underscores the importance of convening a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament in 2018.

Nepal continues to stand for an early conclusion to the fissile material cut-off treaty and considers the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions as a critical step towards giving disarmament a genuine meaning. Last year Nepal ratified the Biological Weapons Convention and last month signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted in July.

Both of those instruments are milestone pillars in our quest for disarmament.

As far as nuclear weapons are concerned, Nepal believes that their use or threat of use is against the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law, human rights law and environmental law. The States possessing them should respect the principles of transparency, irreversibility and the verifiability of those weapons for their total elimination. Nuclear weapons today have been the biggest source of security dilemmas among the nuclear-weapon States themselves and can never be useful deterrents — instead, their total elimination is the only guarantee against their use or threat of use.

Nepal also believes that a legally binding instrument requiring the nuclear-weapon States to provide negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States will be an important step towards achieving nuclear disarmament. Nepal therefore believes that this is a core component of the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. The credibility of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons lies in the effective implementation of its mutually reinforcing pillars. Nepal also supports the inalienable rights of all States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy as per the framework set by the Treaty.

Nepal unequivocally despises all humanitarian and environmental consequences of any deliberate or accidental detonation of nuclear arsenals or of any transboundary movements of hazardous waste and radioactive materials that could have devastating impacts, posing a persistent threat to neighbouring non-nuclear States.

Nepal also maintains that outer space is best kept free of all weapons and arms races and put to peaceful and beneficial use in the greater cause of humankind. The application of space science for satellite communications or observation systems, navigation technologies and disaster information management, for example, would undoubtedly help nations improve people's lives, conserve natural resources and enhance disaster preparedness and mitigation, and thereby help attain sustainable development.

My delegation believes that confidence-building measures, rooted in political commitments, can play an enormous role in creating a conducive environment for general and complete disarmament in line with universally recognized principles. In that context, Nepal

welcomes the adoption of practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons by the United Nations Disarmament Commission, breaking a long deadlock.

The worldwide humanitarian and developmental impacts of the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons has reached menacing proportions. We must stop the utter havoc those weapons wreak on people through the effective implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. International cooperation is a must for enhancing the capacity of the neediest countries for the full and effective implementation of non-proliferation regimes, including Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and other international disarmament instruments. The international community must work collectively to strengthen the oversight mechanisms on small and light weapons to prevent their progressive abuses by criminal elements. Such measures will directly contribute to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.4, aimed at reducing illicit arms flows.

My country believes that the regional approach to disarmament complements the global approach. Regional mechanisms can play greater roles in promoting nuclear non-proliferation, general disarmament and confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels in order to realize a peaceful world free of conflicts and misunderstandings. Therefore, the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament should be further strengthened, well-resourced and developed as repositories for best practices in disseminating disarmament-related information. In that regard, Nepal calls for revitalized regional general disarmament deliberations under the Kathmandu process. Nepal is committed to continue contributing to proactive measures in promoting disarmament activities and encouraging confidence-building measures at the regional level through education, as well as by providing track-two forums for that purpose.

As in previous years, my delegation will present a draft resolution on the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific at the current session of the Committee. We would appreciate the continued support of all delegations for the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus. We also call on all traditional and potential sponsors to co-sponsor the draft resolution. In the same vein, Nepal

echoes the Secretary-General's call to countries in the region and beyond to make voluntary contributions to the Centre to ensure the sustainability of its activities and operations and to enable it to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

In conclusion, we are confident that deliberations in the Committee will contribute to strengthening the disarmament discourse with a view to establishing a safer, more stable and more secure world. We believe that judicious funding for development efforts greatly helps prevent conflicts, which breed mostly in poverty and exclusion. However, while development is consistently underfunded, an incredible amount of resources is spent annually on the modernization of nuclear weapons and the accumulation of various armaments. If those resources were diverted to social, economic and humanitarian causes, even a few percentage points could help achieve many of the transformative SDGs, including the eradication of poverty and hunger, well before 2030. Nepal calls on all to join hands in that direction.

Mr. Manitah (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to chair the work of the First Committee during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. My country's delegation is fully confident that, with your great skill and experience, you will contribute to the success of the work carried out by the Committee. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. Furthermore, we welcome the efforts deployed by the representative of Algeria in chairing the Committee during the previous session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of Arab States and by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.2).

Jordan always underscores that the First Committee is an indispensable and highly important platform to address the challenges facing international peace and security in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation, weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons. The First Committee provides an opportunity to review and assess the progress accomplished in the implementation of the various relevant conventions and treaties. Member States must therefore ensure that the work of the Committee proceeds well. That is what we will do for our part.

We hope that the progress achieved during this year through the adoption of a binding treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is an important addition to the nuclear-weapons regime. Jordan has always been among the first States to join the majority of international conventions and treaties related to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We firmly believe in the culture of peace and in the importance of achieving security in the world. We meet our commitments pursuant to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), as well as those flowing from Jordan's membership in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and other international organizations related to weapons of mass destruction and limiting their proliferation.

With regard to the NPT, my country's delegation would like to reaffirm that States parties must be committed to implementing the provisions of the Treaty, and implementing the relevant resolutions and commitments already adopted, specifically the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the outcome document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which are both benchmarks for the indefinite extension of the NPT. That is why we call on the depositary States of the NPT to live up to their responsibilities and to implement the resolutions pertaining to the Treaty. We reiterate the need for Israel to join the NPT and to place all its nuclear facilities and activities under the IAEA comprehensive safeguards system. In that regard, we call on Member States to continue to support the draft resolution submitted by the Group of Arab States entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", in order to ensure peace and stability in the region.

Article IV of the NPT establishes the right of States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Jordan stresses that using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is an inalienable right of all States, in particular because several States need to develop programmes for the peaceful use of nuclear power leading to the production of the energy at the national level, particularly the States that do not have alternative power sources and resort to using nuclear power, which is indispensable to their sustainable development agenda. It goes without saying that such use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes should be subject to international safety and security standards under the surveillance of the IAEA

and according to its comprehensive safeguards system, while guaranteeing the right of States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy pursuant to the Treaty.

In 1998, Jordan was among the first States to sign and ratify the CTBT. We also hosted Integrated Field Exercise 14, one of the most advanced field-detection mechanisms, which was conducted by the CTBT at the Dead Sea after a four-year preparatory period and where 150 tons of specialized material were used. Jordan attaches particular importance to the entry into force of the CTBT, which is a cornerstone of the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime. In that regard, my country calls on all States, in particular annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty.

Technological progress in cyberspace is an international challenge that should motivate us to step up joint efforts to create an effective mechanism so as to confront terrorist groups that seek to use space to carry out their terrorist activities. As to the use of outer space itself, we underscore the need to prevent its militarization and recall the right of all States to use outer space for peaceful purposes. There is therefore an international need to normalize, rather than restrict, that right.

In conclusion, my country's delegation confirms that it will fully support the work of the First Committee and will work under your leadership, Sir, together with all Member States, during this session.

Mr. Panayotov (Bulgaria): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chair, as well as the other members of the Bureau, on your assumption of the chairmanship and duties, respectively, of this year's session of the First Committee. You can count on the full support of my delegation in your efforts to steer the deliberations to a successful end. I also take this opportunity to commend your predecessor, Ambassador Sabri Boukadoum of Algeria, for his leadership of the Committee during the seventy-first session of the General Assembly.

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/72/PV.2). I would now like to highlight a few points of particular importance to my country.

The focus of work of the First Committee is disarmament and international security; however, we commence our deliberations in particularly challenging times, both for disarmament as well as international

security. The repeated nuclear and ballistic tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in defiance of all relevant Security Council resolutions, are a cause for serious concern. The behaviour of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a threat not only to the Korean peninsula and the region but also to global peace and security. We call upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to stop once and for all its nuclear and ballistic programmes in a complete, irreversible and verifiable manner and to engage in a constructive dialogue with the international community in order to reach a peaceful, diplomatic and political solution.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, concerning Iran's nuclear programme, concluded in July 2015, remains of historic significance. It is proof that even a very complex issue can be resolved via diplomatic means. Its full implementation is of great importance for regional and global stability, and we encourage all parties to the Plan of Action to continue to strictly abide by its terms.

Bulgaria remains fully committed to the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. However, simply prohibiting them via a document will not allow us to meet that objective. We firmly believe that any advance in nuclear disarmament is possible only within the framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and in particular its article VI. The NPT remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the framework for nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Our efforts should be aimed at a constructive, realistic and gradual approach based on practical and implementable measures, building blocks that will strengthen the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Such practical steps include bringing into force the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, overcoming the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament, including through its enlargement, and starting negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Another serious cause of concern for my country and for the international community is the fact that, despite being outlawed, chemical weapons are still being used to kill people, as demonstrated in the reports coming out of Syria. Bulgaria condemns in the strongest possible terms any use of chemical weapons. Such actions should not be left without consequences, and all perpetrators should be held accountable. To that

end, we fully support the work of the Joint Investigative Mechanism and of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Fact-finding Mission. It is our common responsibility not to let a norm against the use of such weapons be eroded.

While it is regrettable that consensus was not possible at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, we are convinced that the treaty needs further strengthening. My country remains committed to working to that end. We expect that a substantive intersessional work programme will be agreed upon at the next Meeting of States Parties.

The area of conventional weapons also merits attention. For my country, progress in that area is of high priority. Bulgaria is firmly committed to the universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) as well as to its full implementation. As a member of the Bureau of the third Conference of States Parties to Treaty, we will continue to work hard for its promotion. By setting an international norm on a responsible trade in arms, the ATT has an important role to play in preventing atrocities, curbing terrorism and promoting international security.

The upcoming 2018 third Review Conference on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects also provides us with an opportunity to strengthen the global regime against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and we should not miss it.

Emerging new threats, such as the vulnerability of cyberspace, require our immediate attention. We need new rules to respond to new challenges. In that regard, Bulgaria supports the development of international norms and principles for responsible behaviour in cyberspace.

Let me conclude on a positive note. We have also seen some encouraging developments in the past year. The consensus reached in the United Nations Disarmament Commission on recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, after an impasse of 18 years, as well as the consensus outcome of the Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, demonstrate that Member States can work together to reach consensual outcomes, even on divisive issues.

Mr. Wroblewski (Poland): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. We wish you success in fulfilling that important function. You can be assured of the full support and cooperation of the delegation of Poland.

Poland fully associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/C.1/72/PV.2). Building on that statement, I would like to point out several issues that are particularly important for my Government.

Having been elected to the Security Council for the 2018-2019 term, Poland is taking special responsibility for international peace and security. Our campaign was conducted under the motto “Solidarity, Responsibility, Engagement”. We are also guided by those principles in the field of disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The best example of Poland’s growing responsibility and commitment is our chairmanship of the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Since its entry into force, in 1970, the NPT has been the cornerstone of the global regime for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and, as such, an essential part of the modern collective security system. Current international geopolitical challenges serve to underline an important role of the Treaty and the necessity to uphold and strengthen it. The NPT helps to ease tensions and build confidence among States and therefore contributes to a more secure, stable and peaceful world.

Poland has always been committed to the NPT and has worked in support of strengthening the Treaty. We believe that, despite different views on the pace of implementing the NPT commitments, all States that are parties to the Treaty share its objectives. We would like to build on it, as well as maintain the positive atmosphere that existed during the first session of the Preparatory Committee in 2017 under the able chairmanship of the Netherlands. We are open to dialogue with all interested countries. Poland’s 2018 chairmanship will focus on upholding the integrity and credibility of the Treaty, on creating an environment for an open, inclusive, mutually respectful and transparent dialogue and on ensuring that the meeting is as efficient

as possible and serves as a practical step towards the 2020 Review Conference, which will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the NPT’s entry into force.

The early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) remains another priority. We welcome international efforts to that end, such as the declaration of the recent Article XIV Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, held in New York.

We are gravely concerned by the sixth nuclear test recently conducted by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. We urge the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to refrain from further provocative actions and abide by its international obligations and numerous Security Council resolutions calling on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to abandon all its nuclear-weapon and ballistic-missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

Poland is in favour of a progressive, step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament, taking into account the legitimate security concerns and commitments of all States. We believe that another important building block in that direction would be an early commencement of the negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty. In that context, we welcome the establishment of the High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group, in accordance with resolution 71/259. Poland has provided a senior diplomat as a member of that group. We hope that the results of its work will facilitate the process and ultimately lead to the start of negotiations on the treaty.

The proliferation of ballistic missiles, especially those capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction, remains a serious challenge to international peace and security. Again, the activities of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, in particular its ballistic-missile launches with a possible intercontinental range, are a source of major concern for the international community. Poland is currently chairing the work of The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, which is the major instrument for transparency and confidence-building measures. With its 138 subscribing States, the Code of Conduct is a good example of how multilateral, consensual and politically binding instruments can play a substantial role in the international security context.

Allow me to take this opportunity to inform the Committee that, on 13 October, we will host a side

event to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of The Hague Code of Conduct.

However, we should not forget about the role of other non-proliferation instruments beyond the United Nations disarmament machinery. Both the Proliferation Security Initiative and the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification have already proved their effectiveness. Poland is an active part of both those endeavours.

As in previous years, Poland will this year introduce in the General Assembly a draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The draft resolution will underline the exceptional role of the CWC in the area of disarmament, preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons, promoting international cooperation and protecting against chemical weapons.

The role of our efforts is more important than ever. This year we marked the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the CWC and the establishment of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). That should have been a very good opportunity to praise our achievements and look optimistically to the future. Unfortunately, despite many successes in recent years, the world of today is still witnessing real threats and challenges related to chemical weapons, including with regard to its key bedrock — the use of chemical weapons. It raises questions on the integrity of the CWC integrity and the credibility of the OPCW. Due to time constraints, I will elaborate on chemical issues during the thematic discussion.

Allow me also to take this opportunity to inform members that, at 6.15 p.m. today, we will open the exhibition devoted to the OPCW and CWC in the cafeteria.

Poland continues to attach great importance to the work conducted within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). The Convention continues to be the most relevant forum where States can voice their concerns on the state of the implementation of international humanitarian law in an unconstrained way. We appreciate the possibility offered by the CCW to address threats resulting from both existing conventional weapons and emerging technologies, such as lethal autonomous weapons systems.

Poland is committed to common efforts to counter the inhumane impact of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which have negative global implications for the economic and social development of nations.

We should not forget about the same degrading socioeconomic impact of the illicit flows of small arms and light weapons. Next year, at the third Review Conference of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, we will be given an opportunity to strengthen our commitment to effectively facing such global challenge. Poland, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, will, *inter alia*, promote responsible export policies on small arms and light weapons, as well as underline the importance of the physical security and secure management of stockpiles.

Poland recognizes the severe impact of anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war on humanitarian situations, stability and development. We will remain committed to ensuring further progress in the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. This year, the sixteenth Meeting of State Parties will be a special event for State parties to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption and signature of the Convention.

To conclude, I assure you, Mr. Chairman, that we look forward to cooperating with you, your staff and all nations towards a successful session of the First Committee.

The Chair: Before giving the floor to speakers in exercise of the right of reply, may I remind delegations that statements in that regard are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for a second intervention.

Two speakers remain on the list for second interventions from the Committee's meeting on Friday, 6 October. We will hear those speakers first.

Ms. Seong-Mee Yoon (Republic of Korea): I asked for the floor to exercise our right of reply in response to the North Korean delegation's second intervention on Friday, 6 October (see A/C.1/72/PV.6). I do not find it necessary to rebut his arguments point by point, as the history of North Korea's military provocations as it relates to the current situation on the Korean peninsula speaks for itself.

No Government would sit back and wait in a situation in which its own national security were at stake.

Working together with the international community, we will continue to speak out and act resolutely to stop North Korea's nuclear and missile programmes. Pyongyang should not underestimate the firm resolve of the Republic of Korea and the international community. Any further provocation by North Korea will be met with an overwhelming response, not only by the alliance between the United States and Korea but also by the entire international community.

As time is running out, the window of opportunity for a resolution of the issue is closing. North Korea must seize the rapidly closing window of opportunity by choosing the path of denuclearization. The Republic of Korea is firmly committed to a peaceful resolution of the issue and stands ready to engage in serious dialogue with North Korea if it changes its course and commits to denuclearization.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Despite the fact that the representative of Britain does not deserve a reply, I advise him that his Government should allow the people of Scotland to exercise their right to self-determination, that his country should leave the colony of Gibraltar and that it should resolve its worsening problems with the European Union. Britain should focus on its internal problems instead of interfering in the affairs of others. It should apologize to the Iraqi people for the invasion of Iraq in 2003, take legal action against Tony Blair and issue reparations to the Iraqi people for destroying Iraq.

We live in the twenty-first century, and Britain continues to occupy many territories across the world. We ask Britain to end its occupation of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I take the floor to exercise my right of reply to respond to the comments that were made by the representative of Syria.

Evidence of the repeated use of chemical weapons in Syria reminds us why it is so important for the Security Council to renew the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism in order to determine which party was responsible. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic confirmed the use of chemical weapons, thereby helping ensure that those who used chemical weapons in Syria will be held accountable.

Through its continued use of chemical weapons and its failure to destroy its chemical-weapons

programme in its entirety, Syria continues to fail to comply with its legal obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). The regime must immediately cease the use of chemical weapons and completely and irreversibly eliminate its chemical-weapons programme, in compliance with its obligations under the CWC and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). The use of chemicals as weapons by any party in Syria is appalling and violates international standards and norms against such use. The United States has long expressed our strong condemnation of the use of chemical weapons and the need to hold those who use such weapons accountable.

I would like to make a point on the Joint Investigative Mechanism. The United States strongly supports the efforts of the Joint Investigative Mechanism to carry out its mandate to investigate the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The use of chemicals as weapons in Syria is a serious concern for the entire international community. We have made it clear that preventing the use and spread of chemical weapons is in the vital national interests of the United States and that, if necessary, we will act to prevent the indiscriminate murder of civilians with such terrible, horrific weapons. The United States will continue to seek accountability through the Security Council and the Organization on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons for the confirmed use of chemical weapons by any party.

Mr. Al-Khalifa (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I asked to exercise my right of reply in response to the representative of the Syrian regime, who made baseless accusations against my country. Those accusations are nothing but words flowing from his imagination. We categorically reject those unfounded accusations, which are pure lies.

It is ironic for the representatives of the Syrian regime to address the First Committee about toxic chemical weapons while their regime's record pertaining to using chemical weapons and toxic chemical substances is replete with crimes and scandals documented by United Nations reports, including the third and fourth reports of the Joint Investigative Mechanism. Those reports confirmed that regime forces used chemical weapons against civilians. There was also a report issued by the International Independent Investigation Commission on the use of chemical weapons in Khan Shaykhoun. To that we can add the regime's long list of war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated

for years. That record prompts the Syrian regime to mislead the international community and divert its attention away from these crimes by holding other countries responsible, whereas other countries have shouldered the responsibility in defending the Syrian people in accordance with international law.

Sending many letters to the United Nations predicting attacks with chemical weapons and noting the relevant scenario as to their use indicate one thing: knowing beforehand about the use of those weapons and trying to ascribe responsibility to the countries that reject gross violations to international law and human rights.

It is also ironic when representatives of the Syrian regime repeatedly talk about the threat of terrorism, while the irresponsible policies of the regime have led to the emergence of terrorist groups that were previously unknown in the region. Contrariwise, the State of Qatar has a positive record that has been commended by the international community in various areas, including in the fight against terrorism.

Mr. Aljaedi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): It was indicated in Syria's statement that chemical weapons were transferred from Libya to Syria and were used there. We would like to make it clear, as we have previously said, that since the end of 2011 and the beginning of 2012, the chemical substances present on Libyan territories were under strict surveillance by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Those substances or precursors were mustard gas only, while according to the OPCW it was sarin gas that was used in Syria, not mustard gas.

The OPCW began successfully disposing of those substances in Libya. By January 2014, the OPCW had successfully destroyed all mustard gas in general. It has since been confirmed that there are no usable chemical weapons on Libyan territory. The OPCW Technical Secretariat has confirmed in its reports that by May 2014 no sarin gas had been found among Libya's chemical weapons. Furthermore, the relevant investigation has reached its final stages, with the remaining stockpiles of chemical precursors having been moved to Germany in September 2016. Since then, the precursors have been in the process of being destroyed at the Münster facility — a process scheduled to end by October 2017.

Mr. Ri In Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I will be very brief in exercising my right of reply to respond to those countries' representatives who

made unacceptable remarks against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. They should know what is the main threat to peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and the world. In previous meetings, I made our position clear several times on nuclear deterrence in self-defence of our country. I therefore do not think that I need to repeat that. However, I would like to make one thing clear. We shall not flinch or go back an inch from the road towards bolstering up the nuclear forces, which we have chosen to safeguard our sovereignty, our right to existence and the supreme interests of the country.

I would also like to clarify something with the South Korean representative, who made irrelevant remarks against our country. Through that representative, I would like to say to the Government of South Korea: do whatever you want to do, but I do not think that your dreams will come true, because South Korea is the only country among the Member States that fully hands over the symbol of sovereign States — the power to control its own military forces — to outside forces. But I warn South Korea that it will be responsible for all the catastrophic consequences as a result of its outrageous actions.

Mr. Canay (Turkey): We categorically deny the allegations made by the representatives of the Syrian regime. That regime's criminal record in the senseless use of toxic chemicals as weapons has been established by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism in three cases in Syria — in Talmenes in 2014, in Qmenas in 2015 and in Sarmin in 2016. As we said in our statement, the use of chemical weapons is a crime against humanity and a war crime, and the officials of the regime who perpetrated those horrific acts must be held accountable.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of the terrorist Wahhabi Bani Saud regime, which sponsors takfiri terrorism around the world, made a statement brimming with hypocrisy and lies in a desperate attempt to cover up the crimes that Bani Saud regime is committing in Yemen, Bahrain, Iraq and Syria. That Wahhabi terrorism has even reached as far as Nigeria and Western capitals. It is unacceptable that the Bani Saud regime has contributed more than \$100 million to the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre while violating Security Council resolutions on counter-terrorism by spending billions of dollars to finance terrorist groups in Syria.

The regime also spends hundreds of millions of dollars to fund religious centres throughout the world with a view to disseminating the Wahhabi ideology, which foments hatred for other religions and calls for death and destruction. Furthermore, the regime recruits thousands of young men and sends them to Syria and Iraq to commit brutal crimes against civilians.

The Bani Saud regime is based on the persecution of the Saudi people, particularly in the eastern areas. The regime recently completely destroyed the city of Al-Awamiyah. In that context, we note that the regime has decapitated 150 persons by the sword this year alone, similar to the way the terrorist Da'esh organization does.

The Bani Saud regime spends billions of dollars on armaments and on providing terrorist groups with weapons, rather than allocating those funds for development and community advancement, inter alia, by allowing women to drive. It looks as if the representative of the Bani Saud regime established for himself a fact-finding mission that drew conclusions before the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism had even completed its work. That is enough of what I have to say about Saudi Arabia.

Mohammed Al-Misfer, a Qatari academic and a media adviser for the Sheikhdome of Qatar, said today on Qatar State television that they are prepared to use chemical weapons to suppress a tribal rebellion in Qatar. We are ready to provide everybody here with the electronic link to that interview.

Khaled Bin Mohamed Bin Al-Atiyah, in his statement made to the French newspaper *Le Monde* on 12 May 2015 in response to a question regarding the position of his country as to whether or not the Government of his country considers the Al-Nusra Front a terrorist organization, said:

“Armed groups are fighting in order to overthrow the regime. Moderate people cannot ask the Al-Nusra Front to stay at home because we do not want to work with you. The conditions on the ground must be taken into consideration and we should be realistic”.

The political realism of the Sheikhdome of Qatar is based on challenging international legitimacy, violating Security Council resolutions on counter-terrorism and supporting the Al-Nusra Front, which is categorized as

a terrorist organization on Security Council lists. That is the way Qatar acts, as everybody knows. It supports terrorism everywhere.

The representative of the United States, while speaking just now, referenced Syria. I would like to remind him of a WikiLeaks document, published in the United States, which mentions the exchange of a secret message in 2006 between the State Department and the United States Ambassador in Damascus. This secret message included a plan to overthrow the Government of my country. I also ask him to read the memoirs of Mrs. Hillary Clinton, in which she confessed that the American Administration had in fact created Da'esh, the Al-Nusra Front and Al-Qaida. Scores of books were written in the United States of America and Europe in that regard. All of them mentioned the manipulation of Islamic political terrorism for overthrowing Governments in our Arab and Middle East region.

We cannot forget what happened in Iraq — the scandal of invading that country and the calamities that followed in our region and in Iraq. Can we forget that the former United States Administration spent \$500 million on financing the training of just 49 terrorists under the pretext, as they claim, of liberating Syria from the current regime? Those terrorists eventually joined the Al-Nusra Front and Da'esh with their American weapons.

My country is committed to all the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and has met all of its commitments. The words of the representative of the United States are unacceptable, and we reject them. He knows better than anyone that his country participated in the destruction of the stockpiles outside the Syrian territories. They know about the quantities and where they were destroyed. That is enough for now.

Mr. AlMutairi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country is exercising its right of reply to respond to the claims made by the representative of Syria. We have grown accustomed to the Syrian regime shirking its responsibilities and trying to distract attention from its repressive practices against its people by citing unfounded claims. The Syrian regime continuously fails to comply with international resolutions, particularly the relevant Security Council resolutions, which condemn the crimes and acts committed by the Syrian regime against its people.

In its statement, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia referred to the results of the fifth report of the

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (see S/2017/131), which the Syrian regime claims that it is committed to. The report has proven that the Syrian regime was responsible for three chemical attacks.

I appeal to the international community to shoulder its responsibility, stand side by side with the brotherly Syrian people and hold accountable all those whose hands are stained with the blood of that people.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.